

May 10, 2011

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the called Council meeting held on April 26, 2011, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 5:30 p.m., May 10, 2011.

Members present: Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilman Guy E. Murray, Jr.; Councilman Steve C. Rush; Councilman C. G. Stanley, Jr.; Councilman James A. Vest; and Vice Mayor Robert T. Wandrei

Member absent: Mayor W. D. Tharp

Staff present: City Manager Charles P. Kolakowski; City Attorney W. W. Berry, IV (arrived at 6:50 p.m.); and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher.

Vice Mayor Wandrei opened the meeting and stated the purpose of the meeting was for a work session on the budget for FY 2011-12.

Randi Herrick, City Registrar, spoke regarding the need to replace the batteries in the voting machines and the need for a Deputy Registrar in order to have someone trained in the duties of the General Registrar. Ms. Herrick stated she has already hired a deputy.

Valerie Wilson, Commissioner of the Revenue, said the State is going to handle the general liability insurance for constitutional officers by paying for it then reducing the reimbursement one month the amount of the premium.

Councilman Vest asked if the letter regarding unfunded mandates had been sent.

The City Manager stated the letter will be prepared for the Mayor's signature when he returns.

Debbie Roberts, City Treasurer, explained that the increase in computer supplies and postage is to take care of the way the cut-offs are handled. Ms. Roberts said the purpose of the change is to get people from being sixty days delinquent for the cut-off down to thirty days.

Ms. Wilson reported that 70 businesses closed in the past year, but 66 businesses started. Ms. Wilson stated that sales of used and new vehicles are down and next year the personal property revenues will probably be down.

Jeff Weddle, Public Services Director, answered questions from Council regarding the following budget items: the landfill, electric department, and the cost of the replacement of a mower.

After a brief discussion, Council asked the City Manager to get informal estimates on tearing down the "Old Yellow" school building.

The City Manager stated the project to make the Municipal Building handicap accessible is estimated to cost \$75,000.

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Chief of Police Day reviewed the vehicles in the Police Department.

Council discussed the Funding Requests from Outside Agencies:

- Bedford Main Street – Councilman Rush stated Council has not received a financial report from Bedford Main Street – Councilman Murray will get this information
- Wharton Gardens – the City Manager stated the increase is for maintenance. Vice Mayor Wandrei reported that the Library has been furnishing water for the garden and will no longer do so.

Council will discuss the Funding Requests from Outside Agencies after the information from Bedford Main Street is received.

Council reviewed the General Fund portion of the budget asking questions for clarification, which included: Peaks of Otter Soil and Water Conservation District; Bedford Cooperative Extension Service; and Amtrack. Various department heads gave explanations regarding the budget items questioned.

Councilman Vest stated that Council had received the letter from the City Manager presenting a synopsis of the proposed budget for FY 2011-12.

Vice Mayor Wandrei spoke about the proposed increase in water and sewer rates. Mr. Wandrei said that approximately fifty-one percent of customers do not use the minimum of 3,000 gallons of water. The Vice Mayor said these customers will be experiencing an increase in costs but will not get any additional benefit. Vice Mayor Wandrei said he suggested to the City Manager that the City look at how it bills water and sewer and break those fees down into two components: 1) accessibility charge – for the privilege of being connected to water and sewer 2) charge for the actual water that is used.

The City Attorney arrived at 6:50 p.m.

The City Manager said it would probably not be a huge savings for customers, but it would be some level of incentive for customers to not waste water and to conserve. Mr. Kolakowski stated the staff could come up with a proposal; however, it would take some time and would probably involve an outside consultant as the rates would have to be developed based on the usage so that significant revenue is not lost. The City Manager said this method would put the costs where the use is.

Vice Mayor Wandrei adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.